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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0868
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0532
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0460

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000941

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/MAG, PRM/AFR, IO/UNP, H, AND DRL/NESCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2019

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: MOROCCO CONVOKES P5+SPAIN TO REVIEW HAIDAR CASE

REF: A. RABAT 0915 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. RABAT 0935 (NOTAL)

Classified By: CDA Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs on November 26 summoned representatives of the P5 and Spain to discuss the Aminatou Haidar case and its potential effect on UN-brokered negotiations over the status of the Western Sahara. The GOM asserted that the next move is Haidar's and encouraged those present to ask her what she wanted. P5 representatives reiterated support for the UN process, urged a quick resolution of Haidar's case, and warned the GOM that it was losing the public relations battle. End summary.

Moroccan Law v. Public Relations

[1](#)2. (C) MFA Director General for Multilateral Relations and Chief of Staff Nasser Bourita convoked senior U.S., British, French, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish diplomats to discuss the Aminatou Haidr case and to once again review what happened at the Laayoune Airport on November 13 (Refs A and B). Bourita stressed that Moroccan actions were in accordance with Moroccan law and asked that negotiations on the Western Sahara not be held hostage to Haidar's actions. In addition to reiterating the events of November 13, Bourita used the two-hour meeting to emphasize that to have made an exception and allowed Haidar to enter Morocco without filling out the entry card would have required a change to Morocco's Constitution and legal code -- something Morocco was not prepared to do. Bourita noted that she was not arrested but was returned to the location from which her flight originated, adding that the U.S. would have done the same thing. He stressed that the GOM believed it had done nothing wrong and was only adhering to its own laws.

[1](#)3. (C) The U.S., UK, and Spanish representatives responded by underscoring the need to find a quick and pragmatic solution to the standoff. Notwithstanding Bourita's assertions about the legality of the GOM's actions, the British DCM warned that Morocco was rapidly losing the public relations battle, as human rights groups throughout Europe and elsewhere were increasingly of the opinion that Morocco was not interested in finding a solution -- a sentiment echoed by all except China and Russia. (Note: The Russian DCM made no comment, and the Chinese DCM stated only that if Haidar had refused to sign an entry card in China, she would have been returned to her point of origin. End Note.) The U.S. also underscored concern about Haidar's health.

Next Steps

14. (C) Apparently concerned about the potential impact of the incident on the UN process to find a negotiated solution to the conflict over the Western Sahara, Bourita called it an attempt to derail the process, adding that the Polisario was already using it as an excuse to defer negotiations. He called upon the P5 1 representatives to not hold the negotiations hostage to the Haidar incident and to appeal to the UNSYG and Personal Envoy Christopher Ross to pressure the Polisario and Algeria to continue the planned talks. Bourita again stated that the GOM would consider reinstating Haidar's Moroccan citizenship if she was willing to admit that she was Moroccan.

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JACKSON